



# at ease

June 2004

## Supporting America

More PT, Drill Sergeant!  
Flights of Fancy

Wisconsin media on  
the battleground

# at ease

June 2004



## at ease

Volume 27 Number 2

Official Magazine of the Wisconsin  
Army and Air National Guard

The Adjutant General: Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening  
Deputy Adjutant General Air: Maj. Gen. Fred R. Sloan  
Deputy Adjutant General Army: Brig. Gen. Kerry G. Denson  
Director of Public Affairs: Lt. Col. Tim Donovan

### At Ease Staff

Publications Editor: Kelly Bradley  
Photo and Copy Editor: Larry Sommers

### Contributing staff writers and photojournalists:

Lt. Col. Brownie Ehlers	Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek
Maj. Bob Giblin	Sgt. Jim Wagner
Capt. Jacqueline Guthrie	Sgt. Ronald Minnick
Lt. Jared Shryock	Spc. Mary Flynn
Lt. Luella Dooley	Spc. Sara Roeske
Cadet Adam Bradley	Spc. Gretal Sharpee
Master Sgt. Michael Schlafman	Pvt. Meghan Phillips
Sgt. 1st Class Julie Friedman	Master Sgt. Wayne Rodriguez

### How to Reach Us

E-mail: [atease@wi.ngb.army.mil](mailto:atease@wi.ngb.army.mil)

Phone: (608) 242-3055 Fax: (608) 242-3051

Address: Department of Military Affairs; Attn: Kelly Bradley  
2400 Wright Street; Madison, WI 53708-8111

#### Submissions

For photo or story submissions, please call (608) 242-3055 or  
e-mail [atease@wi.ngb.army.mil](mailto:atease@wi.ngb.army.mil) for our StyleGuide.

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Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs; Attn: Sarah Selah  
2400 Wright Street; Madison, WI 53708-8111  
Fax: (608) 242-3168 E-mail: [sarah.selah@dma.state.wi.us](mailto:sarah.selah@dma.state.wi.us)

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# Marching on...



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Allison Cooley, 2, Bloomington, celebrates the return of 48 Soldiers of the 229th Engineer Company to Volk Field on Sunday afternoon, April 4. Photo by Ben Plank, courtesy of Dubuque Telegraph Herald.



# From the top

I spent many days during the past 33 months at send-off ceremonies for the more than 4,200 Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have been called to active duty since 9-11. We wanted them all to know that Wisconsin cares for them, and that we appreciate their sacrifices and the hardships their absence would create for their families.

We prayed for the safety of every single Soldier and Airman, every single hour they were serving in harm's way.

In September the first Wisconsin National Guard Soldier since World War II was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries suffered in direct hostile action when a roadside bomb exploded while she was on duty with the 32nd Military Police Company. Then an October landmine incident injured a member of the 229th Engineer Company.

But on April 9, our greatest fear was sadly realized: the Wisconsin Army National Guard lost a soldier to a Baghdad ambush. The death of **Spc. Michelle Witmer** was a terrible loss to her family in New Berlin, Wis., to her 9,900-member Wisconsin National Guard family, and to all of Wisconsin.

Eighteen Wisconsin service members from the active duty U.S. Army and Marine Corps, the Army Reserve and the Wisconsin Army National Guard have lost their lives in Afghanistan or Iraq. It has been said that each life is a universe and that each death is a universe collapsed. Wisconsin has now experienced 18 lives lost, 18 families grieving — and 18 universes collapsed.

In addition to Michelle Witmer, Wisconsin also lost these fine men and women:

- Marine **Sgt. Kirk Straseskie** of Beaver Dam drowned May 19, 2003, near Al Hillah, Iraq. He was 23 years old when he lost his life trying to rescue the crewmembers of a helicopter that crashed in a canal.
- Army **Maj. Mathew Schram** of Brookfield was killed by enemy fire May 26, 2003, in Hadithah, Iraq. He was 36.
- Army Reserve **Sgt. 1st Class Dan Gabrielson**, 39, of Spooner, was killed in action July 9, 2003, in Baqubah, Iraq.
- Army **Spc. Paul Sturino** of Rice Lake died Sept. 22 in Quest, Iraq. He was 21 years old.
- Army **Pfc. Rachel Bosveld** of Waupun was 19 years old on Oct. 26 when she was killed during a mortar attack in Abu Ghraib, Iraq. She was the first female soldier from Wisconsin to die in action in Iraq.
- 36-year-old Army **Sgt. Warren Hansen**, Clintonville, was killed Nov. 15, 2003, when two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters crashed in Mosul.
- 27-year-old **1st Lt. Jeremy Wolfe**, 27, of Menomonie, died in the same Nov. 15 helicopter crash.
- 21-year-old **Spc. Eugene Uhl III** of Amherst was

also killed in the Black Hawk crash in Mosul Nov. 15.

- On Christmas Eve 2003, Army **Maj. Christopher Splinter**, Platteville, was killed when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb on Highway One near Samarra, Iraq. He was 43.



*Albert H. Wilkening*  
Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening

- Army Reserve **Pfc. Nichole Frye** of Lena was only 19 when she was killed by an improvised explosive device on Feb. 16, 2004, in Baqubah, Iraq.
- Also in Baqubah, 23-year-old Army Reserve **Spc. Bert Hoyer** of Ellsworth died March 10 when an improvised explosive device hit his convoy.
- Army **Capt. John "Hans" Kurth** of Columbus died March 13 in Tikrit, Iraq, when his patrol encountered a roadside bomb. He was 31 years old.
- 22-year-old Army **Pfc. Sean Schneider**, Janesville, died March 29 as the result of a vehicle accident near Baghdad.
- Marine **Cpl. Jesse Thiry** of Casco died of injuries received from hostile fire in Iraq's Al Anbar Province April 5, 2004. He was 23.
- Also in Al Anbar Province, Marine **Pfc. Ryan Jerabek**, Oneida, was killed by hostile fire April 6. At age 18, he was the youngest service member from Wisconsin to die in Iraq.
- In Baghdad, 21-year-old Army **Spc. Michael McGlothlin** of Milwaukee died April 17 when an improvised explosive device exploded near his patrol.
- Army **Spc. Robert Cook** of Sun Prairie was killed in an explosion west of Ghazni, Afghanistan, on Jan. 29. He was 24.

We pray we will not lose another single service member from our state, but we fear we will.

Service in the armed forces is not easy work. It is not done without hardship, risk and danger. Yet Americans in uniform have borne hardships, taken risks and faced danger — because these very special Americans have been and continue to be committed to defending the finest nation on earth, the United States of America.



# people in the news

## Honors

The 2004 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldier of the Year is Spc. Darren Habermehl, 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery and the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year is Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Preder, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery.

Two members of the mobilized 107th Maintenance Company were honored by Fort McCoy: The Fort McCoy NCO of the year is Sgt. Donald Graham, and the Fort McCoy Soldier of the Year is Spc. Jackie Griffis.

Four earned Airman of the Year honors from the 128th Air Refueling Wing: Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Rohloff, visual information services superintendent; Master Sgt. Anthony Karwacki, aircraft maintenance first sergeant; Staff Sgt. Timothy Humpal, weather journeyman; and Senior Airman Kristina Villwock, a financial management specialist.



Spc. Darren Habermehl, left, was selected as the Wisconsin National Guard's Soldier of the Year and Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Preder, right, was selected as the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.



Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Rohloff



Master Sgt. Anthony Karwacki



Staff Sgt. Timothy Humpal



Senior Airman Kristina Villwock

## Changes

The Wisconsin Air National Guard has a new chief of staff. **Col. Steve Foster**, former commander of the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, became chief of the Joint Force Headquarters air staff in April. Foster replaced **Brig. Gen. John Croft**, who retired after serving more than 30 years in the Wisconsin National Guard.

**Col. Joe Brandemuehl** succeeded Foster as commander of the 115th Fighter Wing. Until assuming wing command, Brandemuehl was assigned as operations group commander.

Another change of command took place in June for one of the Wisconsin Army Guard's major commands. **Col. Bill Kasten** assumed command of 64th Troop Command. Troop Command's previous commander, **Col. Jim Roth**, was accepted into the resident program of the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

64th Troop Command established a new battalion in May. The 641st Troop Command Battalion absorbed many of the smaller Troop Command units and also several that had been part of the Joint Force Headquarters. **Lt. Col. Mark Bruns** is the first commander of the new battalion, which includes about

500 Soldiers at the headquarters in Madison and:

- West Bend — 832nd Medical Company and Detachment 1, Company D, 109th AVIM;
- Milwaukee — 32nd Military Police Company;
- Madison — Detachment 1, 32nd Military Police Company; 132nd Army Band; Detachment 1, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment; 232nd Personnel Services Company;
- Waukesha — Company B, 118th Medical Battalion.

The Defense Department announced March 9 that Wisconsin was selected to receive one of 12 new National Guard Civil Support Teams (CSTs). The teams are designed to deploy rapidly to assist local first responders in determining the nature of a weapons of mass destruction incident, provide medical and technical advice, and pave the way for the identification and arrival of follow-on state and federal response assets.

Wisconsin's 54th Civil Support Team had been a so-called "light" CST since it was established four years ago with traditional Guard members and little of the specialized equipment a full-fledged, full-time team requires.

The 54th CST will be stationed in Madison under the command of **Maj. Steve Brewer**, who succeeded **Lt. Col. Marshall Schlichting** in June.

# marching



## EAU CLAIRE GUARD UNIT CALLED UP

An Eau Claire-based Wisconsin National Guard infantry battalion has been mobilized for duty in Iraq, authorities said. One of three battalions of the 32nd "Red Arrow" Brigade — approximately 670 soldiers will mobilize at unit

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# On

**By Lt. Col. Tim Donovan**  
*At Ease Staff*

Army and Air Guard members from the Badger State kept up a hectic pace of operations in the first half of 2004, with more of the same on the horizon.

A new round of mobilizations for the Wisconsin Army National Guard came in June — orders that will send Wisconsin troops to Iraq, Afghanistan and Oklahoma. In the same time frame, the Wisconsin Air National Guard deployed a unit to the East Coast to protect the nation's capital from sky-based threats.

The new orders affected 680 Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, bound for Iraq; 11 officers and NCOs from Joint Force Headquarters Wisconsin, who will be part of a task force to advise the new Afghan army; and 11 Soldiers from the 426th Regiment, who will serve as fire support trainers at the Army's field artillery school at Fort Sill, Okla.

Meanwhile, air controllers from the 128th Air Control Squadron, Volk Field, deployed to Bolling Air Force base in Washington, D.C. They will support the air defense mission by scanning the skies in the national capital region from June through September.

## **Combat arms deployment**

When 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, reported for active duty June 20 it was the first time a unit with 32nd "Red Arrow" Brigade lineage was called up since the Berlin Crisis in 1961; and when they eventually deploy to Iraq it will be the Wisconsin Army Guard's first operational deployment of a combat arms unit since World War II.

The infantry troops left Wisconsin June 23 for several months of mobilization processing and training at Camp Shelby, Miss., a state-operated military reservation with a new mission as the mobilization station for a National Guard brigade combat team that will include Wisconsin's infantry battalion. Wisconsin's troops are now training with Tennessee's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment to conduct operations quite different from those that either state's troops were organized or equipped to perform.

Rather than operate as armored cavalry or light infantry, this brigade-sized element will more resemble motorized infantry — a combat formation not fielded in the U.S. Army for many years.

But Operation Iraqi Freedom has forced many creative realignments of forces, and if motorized infantry is what the Army needs — then motorized infantry is what the National Guard will deliver.

## **Task force to Afghanistan**

On June 25, 11 Soldiers from Wisconsin's joint force headquarters left Madison for about two months of additional training in Camp Atterbury, Ind. The Wisconsin troops will join 11 from the Virginia Army National Guard to form the Central Corps Assistance Group, whose missions will include mentoring the Afghanistan national army's Central Corps staff in military tactics, procedures and operations.

The Wisconsin and Virginia Guard members will fall under the command of the Indiana Army National Guard's 76th Infantry Brigade. The brigade will provide command and control of Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix, a multi-state training and assistance element composed of 1,556 Army National Guard Soldiers from around the nation.

The group is expected to deploy to Afghanistan in early to mid-August, according to Col. Todd Nehls, a Wisconsin Army National Guard officer who will command the Wisconsin and Virginia troops.

## **Instructors to Fort Sill**

Filling critical artillery instructor positions at Fort Sill will be the mission of 11 Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 426th Regiment, for the next year. The instructors, normally trainers for field artillery courses offered by the Wisconsin Military Academy at Fort McCoy, will teach artillery fire support courses for active, Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers.

While all these troops were preparing for their 18-month mobilizations, nearly 700 others were coming home to Wisconsin after serving nearly a year in Southwest Asia.

## **724th Engineers come home**

About 500 Soldiers from the Hayward-based 724th Engineer Battalion came home aboard seven separate flights that landed at Volk Field between March 27 and March 29. Even though several of the planes touched down in the middle of the night in unseasonably cold weather, hundreds of family members and friends were there to greet each flight.

Constantly changing arrival times made it hard for families to know when to get to the air base. One flight with 70 members of Company B was originally scheduled to land at 7 a.m. Thursday, March 25, but it actually touched down at 2:20 p.m. Saturday afternoon — more than two days later. Another plane expected early Friday morning at 5:30 a.m. didn't actually arrive until nearly midnight.

The Guard's family support office provided regular updates as best they could, but some planes' arrival schedules changed as many as a dozen times. Still, nearly everyone got the latest information on time, and eager families pressed against a restraining barrier, waving U.S. flags and placards of support as each troop transport touched down and taxied to the end of its 6,423-mile journey from Iraq.

If the families were somewhat frustrated by changing flight schedules, the engineer troops were just happy to be home.

Every Soldier was greeted with a handshake from the adjutant general as a brass quintet from the Guard's 132nd Army Band played "On, Wisconsin" and the Army song. Once on the ground at Volk Field, the Soldiers had about two hours with their families before they were bused to nearby Fort McCoy for five days of demobilization processing.

The 724th Engineer Battalion troops were in Iraq more than 10 months without a single injury from hostile action. Every Soldier who deployed overseas came home safely to the battalion's hometowns of Hayward, Superior, Spooner, Chippewa Falls, Medford, Tomahawk, and Rhinelander.

### 229th Engineers, others return

The 229th Engineer Company wasn't quite as fortunate — but the Prairie du Chien and Platteville unit's 167 Soldiers are also back home in Wisconsin.

Except for one Soldier awarded a Purple Heart Medal after his dump truck was destroyed by a land mine, the unit departed Iraq relatively unharmed.

Two planes, one on March 31 and the other April 4, brought most of the 229th home. About 20 members of the unit's rear detachment got back April 16, and the 229th's final two engineers — assigned as supercargoes to accompany the unit equipment aboard an ocean vessel — finally arrived at a Gulf coast seaport in May.

Both of the unit's hometowns staged parades and armory welcome home celebrations when the majority of the troops got back. Led by fire engines and escorted by police squad cars and community dignitaries, the engineers marched through the streets of Prairie du Chien and Platteville to the applause of local residents who came out to show their support for these men and women as they returned after 14 long months.

Other events honored the 1158th Transportation Company, home from Fort Irwin, Calif., and Fort Knox, Ky.; and the final 45 Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation as they returned from Kuwait.

**Soldiers of the 724th Combat Engineer Battalion, stream off an Air Mobility Command C-5 transport at Volk Field, April 5, 2004, as they arrive home from overseas deployment for Operation Iraqi Freedom.**



Lt. Col. Tim Donovan





From the back of a Humvee, Sgt. Fred Minnick, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, photographs the action on patrol in an Iraqi street. The 139th MPAD has been supporting the Stryker Brigade in Mosul, Iraq.

### MPs in Baghdad

Not all our units or their Soldiers got home as scheduled.

Milwaukee and Madison's 32nd Military Police Company was mobilized the same day the 724th Engineers got the call, but 150 MP Soldiers and their families got a double dose of bad news in early April.

The first news was devastating. On April 9, 20-year-old Spc. Michelle Witmer was killed when her convoy was ambushed on the streets of Baghdad (see profile on page 11). Michelle Witmer was the first member of the Wisconsin National Guard killed in combat since the closing days of World War II — and she was the

first female Soldier killed in action in the 367-year history of the National Guard.

The tragic loss of Michelle Witmer made international news. Michelle's sister, Spc. Rachel Witmer, was serving in the same military police unit in Iraq; and her identical twin, Sgt. Charity Witmer, was also on active duty in Baghdad with another Wisconsin National Guard unit. The whole world watched as Michelle's sisters agonized over their decisions to take the stateside assignments authorized for them after the death of an immediate member of their family.

The second piece of bad news came only a few days later: On April 15 the MPs — who were expecting to leave Iraq within several weeks — were extended up to four months.

Though comforted by word the 32nd is no longer operating inside the dangerous Iraqi capital, the MPs' families continue to hope and pray their troops come home as soon as possible, with no further casualties. No firm timeline for the unit's return is yet established.

### Training the Afghans

More than 1,000 miles from Baghdad, but in another dangerous place, three members of the Wisconsin Army Guard have been quietly at work for many months. This small team is helping to train the new Afghan national army, which was started up from scratch after the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

These three Soldiers didn't leave Wisconsin with the kind of big unit send-offs most Wisconsin Guard troops received, so many of their fellow Guard members know little about them or their mission. But there can be no doubt the job they are doing is important. Drawing down U.S. and other coalition forces depends on the Afghans' ability to assume an increasing role in



Pfc. Steven Jones, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Richard Watts, 232nd Personnel Services Company, display a bronze bust of Saddam Hussein, former dictator of Iraq. The unit deployed to Iraq in February 2004.

their own country's security. And that's what Wisconsin's three Soldiers are helping to make happen.

### Other units

Closer to home, the Guard established a team of medical personnel to coordinate health care, process medical evaluation boards and provide command and control for mobilized Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who are in medical holdover status. The Community Based Health Care Organization is staffed by 32 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers on active duty, operating at the 13th Medical Dental Detachment's armories in Madison and Waukesha.

Four Wisconsin Guard units that deployed overseas in February are now settled in and performing four distinctly different missions.

The 264th Engineer Group's 80 Soldiers operate a command and control headquarters for active, Guard and Reserve engineer units north of Baghdad in the vicinity of Tikrit.

Six Wisconsin members of the Illinois-headquartered 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment are working out of a former vice presidential palace in Mosul.

Waukesha-based Company B, 118th Medical Battalion is part of a multi-state unit headquartered in Connecticut. The 70 Wisconsin troops operate from several locations in the Baghdad area.

The 232nd Personnel Services Company of Madison is also split up into a number of smaller sections. Most of the unit's 50 Soldiers are stationed at one of four camps in Kuwait, but one team is assigned to a base in Qatar. The 232nd's mission is managing military personnel records for Soldiers serving in the region.

### Air Guard missions

Madison's 115th Fighter Wing has more than 100 Airmen on active duty on a 24-hour-a-day fighter alert mission since September 2001. Later this year the unit will deploy overseas as part of an Aerospace Expeditionary Force, the Air Force's scheduled rotations to deliver Air Guard capabilities wherever in the world they are needed.



**Staff Sgt. William Embrey, 32nd Military Police Company, instructs Iraqi Police Service members at the Glock 9 mm range.**

Meanwhile, the 128th Air Refueling Wing's normal mission, mid-air refueling of military aircraft, continues from the unit's base at Milwaukee's Mitchell Field; but the wing is also supporting an unusual new mission in Iraq.

Six of the unit's Airmen are filling shortages in U.S. Army transportation requirements — driving Army trucks, hauling Army supplies, supporting Army Soldiers.

While Air Guard truck drivers support the Army in Iraq, Army Guard security troops are supporting air bases in Wisconsin. Soldiers from the 32nd Infantry Brigade have been assisting the security forces squadrons that protect Air Force assets at the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison and at both the 128th Air Refueling Wing and 440th Airlift Wing in Milwaukee. These "Task Force Red Arrow" troops have been on active duty since February 2003 in a mission that will continue through the end of this year.

### Outlook

Since the global war on terror began in 2001, more than 4,200 men and women from the Wisconsin National Guard — almost 45 percent of the Guard's total force — have served on active duty. But the year 2004 may well end with even more Wisconsin National Guard involvement.

One artillery battalion and a transportation company remain on alert with their 800 Soldiers standing by for possible orders to active duty. 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery has been on alert since April 9; and the 1158th Transportation Company was alerted in early May — even though the entire 299-Soldier unit had already completed active duty assignments that began in March 2003.

In what is described by Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening as the new "steady state" of the National Guard, Wisconsin's Soldiers and Airmen remain ready and continue to serve — whenever and wherever their nation sends them. ■



**Capt. Shaun Mistlebauer, Wisconsin Army National Guard, in tan desert camouflage uniform, pauses with a Special Forces team at the summit of a mountain north of Qalat in south central Afghanistan. Mistlebauer and the team he was with were on patrol, seizing arms caches and conferring with village elders.**



# Daughter, sister, Soldier...Hero

## Michelle Witmer 1984-2004

By Kelly Bradley  
At Ease Staff

"She was a hero when she died."

Spc. Michelle Witmer, 20, of New Berlin, was a member of the 32nd Military Police Company. She was killed April 9 in an attack by small-arms fire and an improvised explosive device in Baghdad, Iraq.

Witmer is the first Wisconsin National Guard Soldier killed in action since World War II, and she is the first female Soldier killed in action in the 367-year history of the National Guard.

Witmer joined the Wisconsin Army Guard in January 2002 and was a student at UW-Milwaukee. While deployed to Iraq, Witmer often spent time at an orphanage in Baghdad. She also arranged to adopt a puppy she had befriended there. The dog was enroute to Wisconsin when Witmer died. Charlotte, a mixed breed, arrived May 5 and has been adopted by the Witmer family.

Michelle's older sister Rachel, 24, was also a member of the 32nd MP Company. Both were deployed to Iraq in May 2003. Michelle's twin, Charity, a member of Company B, 118th Medical Battalion, deployed to Iraq in February 2004.

Witmer was remembered at a memorial service in mid-April. Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, the adjutant general, presented the Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star Medal and the National Defense Service Medal to Michelle's father John, mother Lori, brothers Mark and Tim, and sisters Charity and Rachel.

"Specialist Michelle Witmer is a hero whose service to Wisconsin and to her nation will never be forgotten," said



Michelle Witmer, left, with sisters Rachel, center, and Charity.

Wilkening. "I hope the Witmer family knows just how proud Wisconsin is of Michelle, how thankful we are for her service and how saddened the entire Wisconsin National Guard family is for her tragic loss."

During the memorial service Charity recalled how, when they were little, Michelle told of her desire to be a hero, with the illogic of a small child: "Seriously, I could push someone off a bridge and save them."

"It wasn't by saving someone in a lake," Charity said, "but she was a hero when she died."

## The medal nobody wants to earn

It is only 1-3/8 inches wide, a purple, heart-shaped medal with a profile of Gen. George Washington and a shield of the Washington coat of arms framed between two sprays of green leaves. On the reverse an inscription reads, simply, "for military merit."

The oldest of our military awards, the original Purple Heart, designated as the Badge of Military Merit, was established by Gen. George Washington by order from his headquarters at Newburgh, N.Y., Aug. 7, 1782.

"The General ever desirous to cherish a virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military Merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward," Washington ordered.

Nearly a year later, on May 3, 1783, Washington presented the Badge of Military Merit to two Soldiers from Connecticut. Sgt. Elijah Churchill of the 2nd Continental Dragoons was cited for gallantry in



This Purple Heart is the medal presented to Spc. Michelle Witmer's family.

action at Fort St. George near Brookhaven on Long Island, N.Y., in November 1780, as well as a subsequent action at Tarrytown, N.Y., in July 1781. Sgt. William Brown of the 5th Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Line was also cited. Though records of his citation have never been recovered, it is believed Brown was cited for gallantry during the siege of Yorktown.

Only one other award was made by Washington, on June 10, 1782, to Sgt. Daniel Bissell, Jr. From Aug. 14 to Sept. 29, 1781, Bissell posed as a deserter and spied on British troops in New York to provide valuable information on enemy strength and movement.

Only three of the original badges were awarded — all during the Revolutionary War era — until the medal was revived in the 20th Century. On the 200th anniversary of Gen. Washington's birth, Feb. 22, 1932, War Department General Orders No. 3 reestablished the Purple Heart Medal, which today is awarded to any person wounded in action while serving in any of our armed forces. It is also presented posthumously to the next of kin of personnel killed in action or who die of wounds sustained in action.

It is the medal nobody wants to earn, but also the one most proudly worn.

# Army Unveils New Combat Uniform

The Army officially unveiled its new combat uniform on June 14, the 229th birthday of the United States Army. The wrinkle-free Army Combat Uniform, which features a digitized camouflage pattern, was designed with major input by the noncommissioned officer corps and enlisted Soldiers and was tested by Stryker Brigade Soldiers in Iraq since October 2003.

Three different versions of the ACU have been developed and are on American production lines to be issued by April 2005 to Soldiers in deploying units. Current fielding plans call for fielding to the total Army by December 2007.

"This isn't about a cosmetic redesign of the uniform," said Col. John Norwood, project manager for clothing and individual equipment. "It's a functionality change of the uniform that will improve the ability of Soldiers to execute their combat mission."

Every change was made for a reason. The bottom pockets on the jacket were removed and placed on the shoulder sleeves so Soldiers can have access to them while wearing body armor. The pockets were also tilted forward so that they are easily accessible. Buttons were replaced with zippers that open from the top and bottom to provide comfort while wearing armor.

Changes include removal of the color black and adaptation of the digital print from the Marine Corps uniform to meet the needs of the Army, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Myhre, NCO in charge of clothing and individual equipment.

The Army's Natick Laboratory in Natick, Mass., modified the digital pattern by developing a pattern to replace both the Battle Dress Uniform and the Desert Camouflage Uniform.

Black is not a color found in woodland areas, Myhre said. The colors on the ACU are green and sandy brown.

Patches and tabs are affixed to the uniform with Velcro to give the wearer more flexibility and to save the Soldier money, Myhre said. Soldiers can take the name-tapes and patches off their uniforms before laundering, which will add to the life of the patches. Also the cost to get patches sewn on will be eliminated, he added.

The ACU will consist of a jacket, trousers, moisture wicking t-shirt and brown combat boots. It will replace both versions of the BDU and the DCU. The black beret will be normal headgear for the ACU, but there is a matching patrol cap to be worn at the commander's discretion.

The Air Force is also wear testing a new utility uniform that would possibly replace the current battle dress uniform. Three-hundred of the blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage uniforms are undergoing wear testing through July. ■



## Other ACU features include:

- Mandarin collar that can be worn up or down
- Rank insignia affixed above right chest pocket
- Velcro for wearing unit patch, skill tabs and recognition devices
- Zippered front closure
- Elbow pouch for elbow pad armor inserts
- Knee pouch for knee pad armor inserts
- Elastic leg cuff
- Tilted chest pockets with Velcro closure
- Three-slot pen pocket on bottom of sleeve
- Velcro sleeve cuff closure
- Shoulder pockets with Velcro
- Forward tilted cargo pockets
- Integrated blouse bellows for increased upper body mobility
- Integrated Friend or Foe Identification Square on both left and right shoulder pocket flap
- Calf storage pocket with bellows on left and right leg
- Moisture-wicking desert tan t-shirt
- Patrol cap with double thick bill and internal pocket
- Improved hot-weather desert boot



# Reporters 'downrange' with the Wisconsin National Guard

By Lt. Col. Tim Donovan  
*At Ease Staff*

National news media covering the war in Iraq for the past year have been telling America about political strife in the region, roadside bombs, mounting U.S. casualties, and abuse of prisoners — all realities that must be reported.

But what if a school is rebuilt? What if a new Iraqi police force begins patrolling Baghdad's streets?

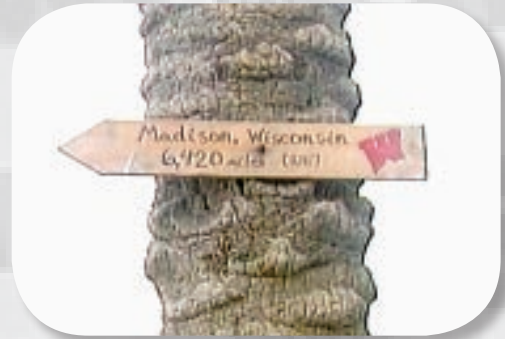
What if National Guard Soldiers from Wisconsin are making a positive difference for the people of Iraq?

Thanks to nine Wisconsin journalists, some of these otherwise overlooked stories also got told.

John Mercure and Michael Lammi, a reporter and photographer for WTMJ-TV 4 in Milwaukee, were the first Wisconsin journalists on the ground in Iraq with Guard troops from the state. Embedded with the 724th Engineer Battalion during the unit's last few days at Fort McCoy, they traveled aboard the May 8, 2003, deployment flight to Kuwait and later into Iraq itself.

Mercure and Lammi spent about a week with the engineers. Their TV stories, showing well-trained, well-led and well-motivated National Guard Soldiers dedicated to accomplishing their missions in

A sign post reminds television viewers in Wisconsin how far Baghdad is from home.



Iraq, brought welcome news to the troops' families and friends.

After a December news conference on the Guard's increasing role in Iraq, other journalists sought opportunities to visit Wisconsin troops.

Reporter Meg Jones writes for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, which had sent two reporters with active duty forces early in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Jones wanted to bring the paper's coverage closer to home, so she and photographer Benny Sieu set out to spend the holidays with the Guard's 32nd Military Police Company in Baghdad.

"I feel very strongly that Wisconsin journalists should be in Iraq — embedded with soldiers from Wisconsin — because if we don't tell their story, no one will," Jones said. For more than a week last December, Jones and Sieu filed daily stories about Wisconsin's military police Soldiers and their job of restoring order to the Iraqi capital.

"I went into the assignment knowing I'd be spending time with people from Wisconsin and knew that Wisconsin people are hard working," said Jones. "I saw that work ethic in the 32nd MP Company."

Jones said the MPs were people "thrust into a dangerous and difficult situation. From what I could see they were making the most of that situation and making a difference in the lives of the Iraqis they came into contact with.

"I'll never forget seeing the looks on the faces of the handicapped children (in a Baghdad orphanage) when they saw their soldiers walk into the room, pick them up out of their cribs and hug and kiss them. The MPs didn't have to adopt an orphanage, but it was something some of the soldiers wanted to do and it was very clear to me how much of a difference they were making in the lives of those children.

"You should be very proud of the National Guard's soldiers," she said. "I was very impressed with their



Meg Jones, a reporter with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, poses outside a bombed-out building while traveling with the 32nd Military Police Company.



professionalism and their dedication to their jobs.”

Madison news anchor John Karcher is a Vietnam-era Navy veteran, so when WISC-TV 3 sent him and photographer John Wacker to Baghdad for eight days in January, it wasn’t an entirely new experience for him.

Like Jones, Karcher was assigned to cover the 32nd MP Company. Loaded down with 93 pounds of cheese, coffee and cigars — and greetings from Gov. Jim Doyle — the WISC-TV crew arrived in Iraq Jan. 12.

Karcher posted daily reports from Iraq on the station’s Web site, then ran about two dozen feature stories in late January. He also called into a Madison radio talk show, by satellite phone live from Baghdad.

“The 32nd’s mission... is right here in downtown Baghdad,” Karcher told WIBA radio listeners Jan. 16. “And that’s why I came. I wanted to spend 15 to 16 hours a day with them in their Humvees and go where they go, see what they see, talk to the people that they talk to on missions.”

Is it important work?

“There is no duty more important than that being performed by the 32nd MP Company of the Wisconsin National Guard,” according to Karcher.

“They are on task, they are on mission, they are pumped, they are working. They are working 15-hour days, seven days a week, our Wisconsin 32nd Military Police Company — and when they do manage to find some sleep, they’re on call,” he said.

Karcher, who has covered National Guard stories off and on during a 25-year broadcast journalism career in the state, said he was grateful for a chance to tell the MPs’ story back in Wisconsin.



**A young Iraqi boy hams it up for WMTV-TV 15 photojournalist Sam Sorenson and reporter Paul Blume embedded with the 229th Engineer Company.**

“These soldiers very much look forward to telling these stories. And, it re-enforces in my mind that the Wisconsin National Guard has come a long, long way,” Karcher reported on the station’s Web log. “These troops are in no way ‘weekend warriors’ anymore, and when you see what they’ve been up against and doing here you will have a new appreciation for their service.”

The 229th Engineer Company of Prairie du Chien and Platteville also got coverage from a Madison television station.

WMTV-TV 15 reporter Paul Blume and photojournalist Sam Sorenson traveled to Tikrit in February to live with the unit’s engineers near the end of their 10-month overseas mission. In nightly news reports and a special one-hour television documentary, Blume showed viewers what life was like for the engineers in Iraq. Their video images of a pre-convoy safety briefing, dangerous highways, and a scary, convoy-halting traffic jam, captured the flavor of a 229th mission in Iraq.

“The 229th was incredible in terms of access,” Blume said. “Nothing was off limits and I think it made for really interesting television back home — everything from senior leadership meetings to what it’s like living in the barracks.

“What I learned is how regular citizens are forced to step up when called on by their military leaders. They’re teachers or police officers or students — they’re your neighbors — and all of a sudden they become soldiers.

“I was really impressed by what they do and how they were able to survive — to do a job and to rebuild a country.”

Blume and Sorenson were the only Wisconsin journalists to get a firsthand look



**WMTV-TV 15 reporter Paul Blume visits the hole where Saddam Hussein was captured.**



inside Saddam Hussein's "spider hole" hideout near Tikrit. Although Wisconsin viewers saw plenty of spider hole footage when Hussein was captured in December, these pictures placed the former Iraqi dictator right in a Wisconsin Guard unit's backyard — and brought this major international news story home to two Southwestern Wisconsin communities.

The latest Wisconsin journalist embedded with a Wisconsin National Guard unit was newspaper reporter Lee Sensenbrenner of the Capital Times in Madison. Sensenbrenner worked for months to arrange a visit to Waukesha's Company B, 118th Medical Battalion, but as he was about to leave in early April, security in Iraq had deteriorated and the casualty toll was on the rise.

Capital Times editor Dave Zweifel, a retired Army Guard colonel and former public affairs officer, wanted to know if Sensenbrenner would be safe. The only assurance the Guard could give was that Sensenbrenner would be as safe as the Soldiers he was covering.

He made the trip.

"It was a story that I wanted to cover, to be there for," Sensenbrenner wrote in the Capital Times. "I thought that being with a medical battalion would offer an interesting window into Iraq, allowing me to speak with patients, doctors and troops. And on another level, I was personally curious to see their work. My father was a medic in Vietnam," he wrote.

All nine journalists who traveled to Iraq got home safely — and brought with them the otherwise untold stories of Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers. At significant risk to their own safety, these reporters performed an important service: They told Wisconsin about the quality of our state's men and women who serve America, the sacrifices they make, and the dangers they face every minute their boots are on the ground in Iraq.

"I salute and pray for our soldiers. I praise their families," Karcher said in his final Web posting. "I came home with newfound respect and admiration for the Wisconsin National Guard." ■

**Top to bottom:**

■ John Karcher of WISC-TV 3, Madison, ponders his choice of meals — lobster or Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) — while embedded with the 32nd Military Police Company in Iraq.

■ Sgt. Wade Hallett, a member of the 32nd Military Police Company, makes a new friend at an orphanage in Baghdad, Iraq.

■ Mustang Base was the home of the 32nd Military Police Company while stationed in Baghdad.

■ Spc. Danielle Robinson, a member of the 32nd Military Police Company, talks about life in Iraq to WISC-TV 3 news anchor John Karcher and cameraman John Wacker.

June 2004







# **Saving lives in the Great North**



**By Kelly Bradley**  
**At Ease Staff**

*Sgt. Craig Hoffman was a little warm. Sitting on a 5-by-12-inch seat and secured with a single strap, Hoffman was dangling 250 feet in the air above the forest fire. He could see a 20-foot-wide hole in the trees where the injured firefighter lay, and he signaled his helicopter crew to lower him. Hoffman clung to the jungle penetrator — a weighted shaft with fold out seats — and rode through the trees onto the ground. It was windy with the flames whipping about, but Hoffman, a flight medic, knew he had to reach the injured man.*

*Once on the ground, Hoffman rushed to the unconscious firefighter, who had been stung by a bee and was in anaphylactic shock. He administered antidotes, and the man was now awake; but Hoffman knew the firefighter had to get to a hospital fast. He sent him up to the hovering aircraft on the jungle penetrator — instead of waiting for a basket, the usual mode of transportation for injured patients.*

*It was now Hoffman's turn to ride back up. But by this time the winds were too strong, and the helicopter crew radioed Hoffman that they couldn't risk hoisting him at this location. The pilot directed him to another area about a mile away. Using his compass, Hoffman hiked through the hills to his new extraction point.*

*But the danger wasn't over yet — the winds were still very powerful. Hoffman knew it would be a bumpy ride, so he curled into a ball around the 3-foot-long jungle penetrator. The perspiring pilots were determined to hold the Huey helicopter as steady as they could, but Hoffman still swung through the trees like a wrecking ball. He could feel tree branches cutting deep scratches on the outside of his helmet. Once on board the aircraft, Hoffman and the crew breathed a huge sigh of relief.*

Just one of the dangerous  
rescues for the West Bend-  
based 832nd Medical  
Company deployed  
at Fort  
Lewis,

Wash. Forty-four of the air ambulance company's Wisconsin-based Soldiers, and 16 from Delaware, were mobilized and deployed in February 2003. They replaced a Fort Lewis active-duty unit who is currently serving in Iraq.

Their mission: to provide air ambulance services to Fort Lewis, Yakima Training Center and the surrounding area. Because of live-fire exercises and the remoteness of Yakima, the 832nd must have a helicopter on standby 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They also participate in Military Assistance to Civilians missions, rescuing injured climbers and hikers in the mountains.

But the unit's tasks don't end there. They have been training Iraq-bound units at Fort Lewis to load patients onto aircraft and to call in a MEDEVAC rescue.

The blended two-state unit completed 115 missions in 2003 and 38 so far this year. In September 2003, the unit supported the Army's firefighting mission in Montana. Soldiers and MEDEVAC units were sent to relieve maxed-out civilian firefighters and rescue units.

"The Soldiers have done a good job melding together as one unit," said Maj. Robert Carty, commander of the 832nd. "Delaware only became a MEDEVAC unit three months before deploying. One of our real successes is working together."

The work is important and dangerous. Hoffman, a Beaver Dam resident, remembers another harrowing rescue: In the remote Washington mountains at 7,000 feet elevation, a climber had fallen off a 120-foot cliff onto a ledge and broken both legs. The climber, unable to move, spent the night on the ledge while his friend hiked to a phone. The next morning the 832nd crew set out to search for the victim through the miles of mountainous terrain. The injured climber had no signal flares and they knew it would be difficult to find him.

"It was fate that the pilot saw him," Hoffman said. "Good thing he had red pants on."

While the aircraft hovered, Hoffman took his uncomfortable ride on the jungle penetrator down to the injured man on the ledge. Realizing he would not be able to get the man into a basket while teetering on the ledge, Hoffman told the patient "even though you'll be in pain, the only way out is on the jungle penetrator." Even a ride up on the small anchor-shaped apparatus meant standing on the edge of the ledge — overlooking the 600 foot shear drop.

Both rescuer and rescued made it home safely. Viewing photos of the rescue afterward left Hoffman a little shaky.

"But I wouldn't trade this experience for anything," he said about his year being deployed to Fort Lewis.

The 832nd expects to complete its mission by the end of this year. ■

# Northwest

**Sgt. Craig Hoffman (standing) prepares to strap an injured climber onto the jungle penetrator.**



*In a mock  
aircraft,  
fliers hone  
real skills.*

# Flights of Fancy

**By Pvt. Meghan Phillips**  
*At Ease Staff*

*Flying a routine mission from Hawaii to North Dakota in a KC-135, you find yourself flying into an electric storm. Safely maneuvering out of the storm, you continue on the mission, only to notice all of your gauges going awry. In an instant, you lose control of the plane and can sense your rapid plummet from the skies.*

*With the fatal impact in sight, your heartbeat racing and blood pressure rising, the lights are suddenly turned on and the plane rights itself to a stationary position. Unbuckling your seatbelt, you step out of the cockpit to find yourself in an oversized garage.*

The aircraft cockpit is a simulator of the KC-135 Stratotanker. An exact replica of the KC-135 cockpit, but powered by computers and hydraulic lifts instead of jet fuel, it occupies an oversized training room of the 128th Air Refueling Wing at General Mitchell International Airport, Milwaukee.

For the past ten years, Guard pilots from

Wisconsin and neighboring states have honed their skills on this machine — the only KC-135 simulator in the Air National Guard inventory.

“It’s a good review for the pilots,” said Shannon Yenchesky. She and her husband Dan work as part-time pilot instructors, coaching pilots through their simulator-based training. Dan is a major in the 128th and Shannon a major in the Air Force Reserve. Dave Lambert, a retired Air Force pilot, is the simulator site manager. Pilots visit the simulator three times a year to practice, twice to work on flight procedures and once on “crew resource management” — how flight crew members handle their tasks in the cockpit.

Nearly two years ago, the addition of hydraulics gave the simulator program a noticeable boost by incorporating cockpit movement into the training program, providing a realistic feeling of flying. That feeling is so realistic some pilots have gotten airsick in the simulator. A visual display projected where the windows would be in a real cockpit enhances the sense of truly being aloft.

With the technology behind these machines, the flight instructor can really take pilots anywhere. Though the scenery lacks detail, pilots can see they’re flying above an ocean or a mountain range.

“It really mimics the situation, gets your heartbeat going,” Dan Yenchesky said. “It’s really valuable training, giving pilots an opportunity to practice problems they have, be it tactics used or landing procedures.”

While the machine may be seen as an elaborate video game, the pilots know better than to treat it as such. Each simulator run is set up for about four hours; pilots practice maneuvers and listen to critique from their instructors.

Teamwork is promoted. Without relying on their crew, the pilots wouldn’t

**The KC-135 aircraft training simulator cockpit, 128th Air Refueling Wing, at General Mitchell International Airport, Milwaukee.**



Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Rohloff



**Maj. Dan Yenchesky, 128th Air Refueling Wing, takes action to control a bucking and bouncing aircraft, during a training session in the unit's KC-135 simulator.**

*Sgt. Jim Wagner*



be able to work their way through malfunctions and storms. Before pilots are allowed to use the simulator in Milwaukee, they must go through extensive training on non-mobile simulators.

At a training base in Oklahoma, pilots in a dummy cockpit gain familiarity with the inside of the aircraft. After mastering their checklists and the location of equipment on the flight deck, they are ready to “fly” a simulator and find out how it feels to truly fly a KC-135. This helps the pilots prepare for malfunctions and emergencies. They can also practice landing on a particular runway before they must do it for real.

When the pilots have conquered the simulators, they go on to the real deal where their first flight ever is with passengers on board.

“That’s the high quality training you get from these machines,” Shannon Yenchesky pointed out.

Training pilots to respond to a crisis and to maneuver through tough situations is extremely valuable in itself, but simulators save money for the taxpayers as well. While the simulator’s initial cost is over \$42 million, its operation is much less expensive than burning through 10,000 pounds of JP-8 jet fuel on a training mission.

128th Air Refueling Wing aircrews fly hundreds of missions every year. Hands-on practice flying through electrical storms or aircraft malfunctions, acquired through simulator training, gives wing pilots the sure knowledge that they are trained to traverse the skies with confidence. ■

**Below: Flight safety technician Russell Schmalz holds a flashlight as flight safety lead technician Bob Sciarra checks hydraulic movement controls under the cockpit of the KC-135 flight simulator.**



*Master Sgt. Thomas Proctor*

# JOINT STAFF PASSES FIRST TEST

**By Sgt. Jim Wagner**  
*At Ease Staff*

*It's July 3, everyone's at home getting ready for a three-day weekend with family and friends. Suddenly, the call comes: A commercial airplane has crashed five miles out of Waupaca Airport, cutting a swath of destruction miles in length.*

*Jet fuel and large pieces of airplane have reportedly landed in nearby Rainbow Lake, close to a veterans' home, causing casualties along the debris path. The governor quickly declares a state of emergency, mobilizing civil agencies like the State Patrol and the Red Cross.*

*It's immediately apparent that the civil authorities aren't enough: Operation Plan Badger goes into effect, combining Army and Air National Guard elements under Wisconsin's new Joint Force Headquarters.*

Thus began Joint Force Exercise (JFEX), an early test for the reorganized headquarters elements of the Army and Air National Guard. For the first time since they were organized in response to a national-level initiative by Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, the state's new Joint Force Headquarters would engage in a tabletop exercise based on an in-state disaster scenario.

Army and Air Guard staff members, led by Army Guard Lt. Col. Joseph McGrath and Air Guard Maj. Erik Davison, were assembled in a room at state headquarters and given the task of working as one team to provide military support for civil agencies responding to the simulated airline disaster. The object was to generate a simulated operational order that would move the required military units to provide needed support, if the situation were real.

McGrath described the exercise as the "walking stage" of the new team's efforts. Three months earlier, in the "crawling stage," the land and air elements had begun meeting as one team to hammer out a disaster response policy.

"We need to refine our walking and work on running," he said of the exercise, which provided information to further improve the team's response. "The key was

to involve JFHQ with outside agencies."

The JFEX scenario added an extra wrinkle — a Federal Bureau of Investigation report that there was a package onboard the aircraft, which originated in Panama, with unknown contents.

In response to the FBI tip, the military would be needed for security support, until on-site responders could identify the contents. Combine this with recalling military personnel on a holiday weekend, providing security around the entire crash site, determining whether jet fuel has contaminated Rainbow Lake, looking for survivors, putting out the fires that ring the site, coordinating military efforts with those of other agencies — and it's easy to imagine the stress level.

While the minutes ticked away in "exercise time," the headquarters element worked to activate personnel and equipment to meet the particular challenges involved.

Added on was the stress of marrying Army doctrine and culture with the Air Force's. Despite some initial communication problems, Davison said troops on both sides of the cultural divide kept their minds open to new thoughts and directions to take.

"As with any new change, there's growing pains," he said. "It was very refreshing; people have been very open about making this work." ■



Cadet Adam Bradley

**Members of the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Staff gather around a tabletop model of a simulated disaster site in a Joint Force Exercise (JFEX) held at the Guard's Madison headquarters in February 2004. From left, Lt. Col. Joseph McGrath, Master Sgt. James Bethke, Staff Sgt. Wendy Hendricks, Staff Sgt. Kuldeep Jasrotia, Ron Woods — safety/security chief of the Wisconsin Veterans Home — Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Gundek, Maj. Erik Davison and Master Sgt. David Owen.**





# More PT, drill sergeant!

By Cadet Adam Bradley and Lt. Jared Shryock, *At Ease* Staff  
Oshkosh Northwestern photo by Joe Sienkiewicz

Time to dust off those running shoes and prepare for the Army Physical Fitness Test — or its Air Force equivalent. In January 2004, the Air Force adopted a fitness test similar to the Army's. Both consist of three events: push-ups, sit-ups and a run — two miles for the Army, one and a half in the new Air Force test. Push-ups and sit-ups are scored on number completed, and the run is timed. Scores and times are adjusted for age and gender. PT tests are intended to give the commander a picture of the Soldier's or Airman's overall fitness level.

“Our Soldiers in the Guard are on average five to seven years older than their active duty counterparts. The active duty Soldier is younger and does mandatory unit physical training several times each week,” said Brig. Gen. Kerry G. Denson, Commander of the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Whether you’re an old hand gearing up for your annual or semi-annual PT test, or a newcomer trying it for the first time, here are some tips to help improve your score.

## What to eat

Avoid a high-protein or high-fat meal the night before a PT test, recommends Dennis Kline, certified strength and conditioning specialist and coach practitioner at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. Instead, eat lean meat like chicken or fish, one or two vegetables, and fruit. It’s OK to eat a normal meal with foods you enjoy, but don’t make yourself digest a large meal before the test — it will overstress your body and reduce your performance.

If you eat breakfast before a morning physical fitness test, choose light foods that are easy to digest and do not cause a blood sugar spike. Pears, apples and raisins are suitable an hour or two before the test. They increase your blood glucose slightly for a long period of time, says Kline.

## Online resources:

The Wisconsin Army National Guard has developed an online presentation explaining the Army Physical Fitness Test Standards. This presentation shows Soldiers the correct way to do a sit-up, and push-up; tips on successfully completing the two-mile run; body fat measurements; height and weight standards; and the body fat percent table. You can view this narrated program on the **Intranet**, under the **DCSOPS/G3** section. Click on **Library**, then **Proper APFT Form**.

### Other Web sites:

[www.hooah4health.com](http://www.hooah4health.com)

[www.presidentschallenge.com](http://www.presidentschallenge.com)

[www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)

[www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov)

Avoid food with low water content, advises Kline, “because next thing you know, you’re going to go through the digestion process.” This causes more blood flow toward your internal organs to digest the food, with less blood available for test performance.

## Push-ups and sit-ups

Give your muscles 48 hours’ rest before the physical fitness test, says Staff

Sgt. Roxanne Bengel, a personal fitness trainer and Pilates method instructor with certifications from the American Council on Exercise and the International Sports Conditioning Association. When strengthening your muscles, she advises, make sure each separate muscle group gets 24 to 48 hours’ rest between full workouts.

When practicing push-ups, says Bengel, train with a variety of push-ups to target various muscle groups. This can

be done by changing the placement of your hands. Common variations include the wide-arm push-up and the close-hand push-up. A regular push-up is performed with the hands at shoulder width. To perform a wide-arm push-up, set your hands outside your shoulders; a close-hand push-up is done with the hands placed inside the shoulders. Elevating your feet is another way to target different muscles in the upper body.

Work the muscles to the point of muscle failure, but give them a day of rest before doing it again.

Proper form is essential; an incorrectly



Cadet Adam Bradley

Master Sgt. Jim Janzer, Headquarters Detachment, demonstrates the proper technique for a push-up — body should form a straight line from shoulders to ankles.



performed push-up does not count toward the final test score. The accompanying photos show the proper form.

To strengthen your abdominal muscles for sit-ups, Bengel says, it is necessary to work their full range of motion. Exercises such as the “crunch,” which focus on partial abdominal movements, are not very effective for increasing abdominal strength. It is also important to know that the sit-up event tests hip-flexor muscle endurance as much as it tests abdominal endurance. Thus, exercises that target your hip-flexors, like the flutter kick — in which you lie on your back and alternate single leg lifts — will greatly increase performance on the sit-up event. The most effective way to train for sit-ups, however, is to practice doing sit-ups.

## Running

Drink enough water. Dehydration can decrease performance by five percent. For example, a soldier who normally runs two miles in 16 minutes would run the distance in 16:48 if dehydrated. An extra 48 seconds could mean the difference between success and failure on the test.

Prepare by running at the same time of day as the physical fitness test. “If the test is at eight in the morning, and you practice your run at the same time, you’ll learn what you can and cannot eat. What works for me isn’t going to necessarily go to work for you,” says Kline. “Make sure you drink enough water, and stay away from caffeinated or alcoholic



Cadet Adam Bradley

**Master Sgt. Jim Janzer, left, and Lt. Jared Shryock, Headquarters Detachment, show that during a sit-up the upper body must be raised forward to, or beyond the vertical position.**

beverages the day before the test.”

After the test, Kline recommends, eat one gram of carbohydrates per kilogram of body weight and drink 16 ounces of water for every pound lost during the test. A bagel and a pint of water will probably do the trick.

If you commit to these guidelines and train consistently, you should be on your way to a great score. In our current operating environment, the fitness level of Soldiers and Airmen is vital to

successful and safe missions.

“The commanders in theater are all telling me the same thing: get the Soldiers ready before they get here,” said Denson. “Our Soldiers in theater are carrying over 70 pounds of equipment in 120-degree heat, they must be in shape.”

Commanders are paying especially close attention to the fitness levels. It is your duty as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces to be physically prepared to complete your mission. ■

## New Air Force physical fitness program:

Airmen will begin hitting the track soon as the Air Force begins a new physical fitness program. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper directed that Airmen will now test their fitness levels by performing sit-ups and push-ups and running 1.5 miles. Jumper cited the physical requirements demanded by recent deployments around the world as the impetus for the change. The cycle ergometry test, in use for the past 10 years, will continue for those who, for legitimate reasons, are not able to run. Other changes include issued workout clothes and a renewed focus on Airman physical fitness. More information is available at [www.af.mil/news/USAF\\_Fitness\\_Charts.pdf](http://www.af.mil/news/USAF_Fitness_Charts.pdf).

*Compiled from an Air Force Link new release.*

### Determining Fitness Score

Fitness level is determined by adding aerobic fitness, body composition, pushup and crunch component points.

<b>Fitness Level</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
Excellent	> 90
Good	75 - 89.9
Marginal	70 - 74.9
Poor	< 70



*“We have a team where federal and state, military and civilian all contribute to accomplishing our important missions.”*

Julia Andreas, a facility repair worker, repairs an antenna on the roof of Joint Force Headquarters, Madison.



# Teamwork

**Story and Photos by Larry Sommers**  
*At Ease Staff*

We're glad to help.

After all, you do the hard stuff: Leaving your family and full-time job to travel half a world, live in primitive conditions, and duck hostile ordnance. Just think of us as folks who keep the home fires burning.

We're the state employees of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs.

We pay the bills, fix the plumbing, put out fires and — oh, yes — give the orders.

Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, the adjutant general of Wisconsin, and his deputies, Maj. Gen. Fred Sloan and Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson, are, surprisingly to some, employees of the State of Wisconsin. They answer to the governor, as well as to federal authorities, for the readiness of Wisconsin's Army and Air National Guard. They are assisted by some 350 state civilian employees, who support the state's 10,000 Guard members in a variety of ways.

Jennifer Weiler is a fire/crash rescue specialist assigned to Truax Field in Madison. The Truax Fire Department supports 115th Fighter Wing operations and is also available for emergencies involving civilian aircraft at Dane County Regional Airport, which uses the same runways. At a moment's notice, Weiler might be called on to fight an aircraft fire, rescue crew members or civilians, render emergency medical service, or contain a hazardous materials spill.

"I enjoy the camaraderie in the station, the teamwork on the scene, the critical and analytical thinking skills required to perform my job — and of course, I enjoy helping people," she said.

State employees also handle facility maintenance chores, air base security, environmental and real estate planning and consulting; public affairs, human resources, information management, mailroom and printing services; legal affairs, purchasing, and budget and finance management. Some 85 percent of the department's employees are union members, represented by one of 11 bargaining units.

The Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy for troubled youths is run entirely by state employees — team leaders, teachers, social workers,

counselors, recruitment/placement/mentorship coordinators, a nurse clinician, and management and support staff.

"My position is like that of an assistant principal in a regular public school," said Peter Blum, the Academy's deputy director — "I deal with the more serious discipline issues that arise with cadets." Eight years of this demanding work has not worn Blum down. He'd like to see the program expanded, "so we could take better care of Wisconsin's 84,000-plus high school dropouts and habitual truants."

Some state civilian employees came to their present positions from a Guard background.

"I was in the Guard for over 10 years," said Angie Colden, "so I have a very fond feeling for it." Colden is information security program manager for Truax Field, State Headquarters and Volk Field. She issues, controls, and inventories restricted area badges and Geneva Convention cards for those Guard members who need them. She also administers initial investigations and periodic reinvestigations for security clearances. "All military members must obtain and maintain a current security clearance to be eligible to deploy or access classified information," Colden said.

Some state employees are in clerical fields, like Christine Schaeve, secretary to the Volk Field base commander. She enjoys meeting and talking with people from all over the country.

"Many visitors make courtesy visits to the commander," she explains, "and generally I'm the first person they meet when they arrive at the headquarters building."

Others apply their minds and hands to physical

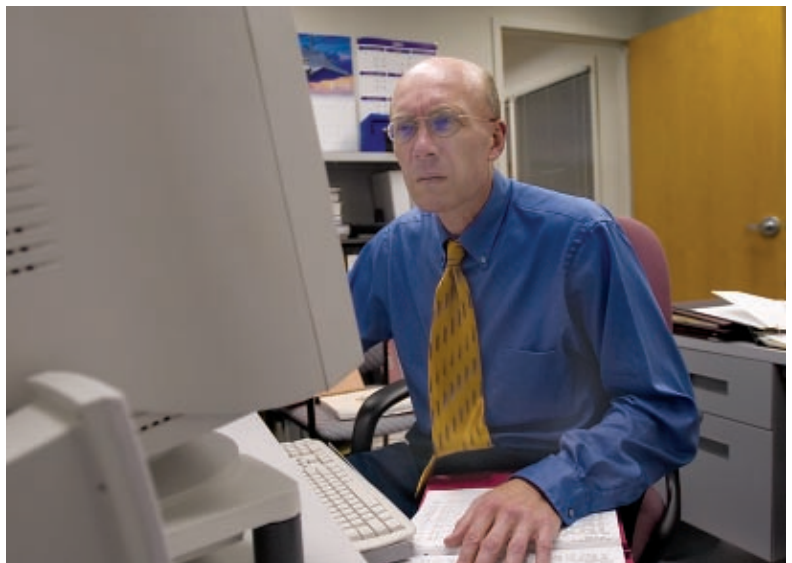
problems, like Peter Holzman, a 30-year state employee in the Facilities directorate. His job includes not only making mechanical repairs to the state's 87 building complexes (armories, shops, headquarters, administrative and aviation facilities), but also training other facility repair workers to maintain mechanical equipment.

"Working with different people and solving a mechanical problem is always challenging and rewarding," said Holzman. "My position allows freedom to make choices in ways to make repairs. The mechanical problems are always different, so my work is constantly changing."

Whatever the nature of their work, the Wisconsin National Guard's state employees are valued for the contributions they make to military readiness, both for state emergencies and national call-ups.

"Our nation's defense forces can't operate without the Guard," said Wilkening — "but just as true, the Guard can't do its job without the great support of our Wisconsin state employees. We have a team where federal and state, military and civilian all contribute to accomplishing our important missions."

One member of that team, Julia Andreas, wants Guard members to know how she, as a state employee, sees them: "Anyone who is willing to risk his or her life for my freedom is a truly great person." ■



**Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs budget and finance director Brett Coomber crunches numbers in his office.**

# *Fast Food in the Field*

**Story and Photos by  
Larry Sommers  
At Ease Staff**

Coming soon to a theater of operations near you: Containerized Kitchens, the Army's answer to the pop-up camper.

Wisconsin's 32nd Separate Infantry Brigade received its first two CKs in August — one for the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and one for the 132nd Support Battalion. The CK is a major advance over the Army's familiar Mobile Kitchen Trailer.

"It's a lot better than the MKT, I'll tell you that," said Spc. Robert Hitz, an Antigo potato farmer and a food service specialist in the 32nd Brigade. Hitz and about a dozen fellow Badger Guard cooks got hands-on training with the new kitchens August 11-13. Contract trainers from the Advanced Design Corporation conducted the training at Camp Williams, under the eye of Army program managers from the Soldier and Biological Chemical Command, Natick, Mass.

"Everything is in one standard shipping container, 8 by 8 by 20 feet," said Earl Marshall of the Integrated Materiel Management Center's Logistics Support Team. "It opens out to 24 by 20 feet. Gives a lot more space for the soldiers to work in it, and for the soldiers doing the eating."

The CK can feed 800 troops, so one

**Pfc. Luke Swendrzynski, top, Cpl. Andria Stocker and Staff Sgt. Terrence May, food service specialists of Headquarters Company, 132nd Support Battalion, prepare the Containerized Kitchen's mechanical room for operation.**







**Above:** Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers, accompanied by Army civilian contractors, tour their new Containerized Kitchen.

**Below:** Soldiers of Headquarters Company, 32nd Separate Infantry Brigade, and the 132nd Support Battalion, practice rolling down the “wings” of their new Containerized Kitchen.



CK can take the place of two MKTs in feeding a battalion. The kitchen sets up in minutes. It has “modern burner units” or MBUs that run on JP-8, the Defense Department’s one-fuel-for-everything fuel; air conditioning to protect the cooks from heat; running water, large refrigerators, and a 10-kilowatt generator. It can travel on a railcar or in a ship’s hold or the cargo bay of a C-130 aircraft; and it is wheeled, so it can be pulled by truck, as a semi-trailer. In the field, its generator is tactically silent, and the kitchen can be operated with red lights under blackout conditions.

After a brief classroom introduction, the students — food service technicians from 32nd Brigade headquarters and the 132nd Support Battalion, plus a few Indiana troops learning on Wisconsin equipment — headed for two olive-drab wheeled boxes sitting behind the Combined Support Maintenance Shop and began learning how to unpack and deploy the kitchen.

After opening a small mechanical room at the back end of the trailer — which houses the generator, two air-conditioners, an exhaust fan and power converters that supply a 28-volt DC control current for the MBUs — the troops were ready to crank down and level the two side wings. Unlike the hard center section, the wings are roofed with canvas supported by metal struts and braces that must be inserted. One wing houses kitchen operations; the other, with a doorway at either end,

funnels hungry troops down the serving line. The center section, with a steam table and griddle, is the serving line itself; cooks work on one side, diners file along the other. Because of limited space in the serving wing, beverages and condiments, in most cases, will be set up outside the kitchen.

“I’m brand-new at this MOS,” said Spc. Greg Chrisman, Schofield. “I love this system.”

Experienced cooks agreed that the CK represents a major step forward.

“The MKTs were supposed to be

a short-term solution, and they’ve lasted 25 years,” said Staff Sgt. Terrence May, Portage.

Wisconsin’s two CKs comprise one-ninth of the 18 currently allocated to the entire National Guard — a dividend of the 32nd’s new status as one of the Army’s enhanced brigades. Even troops on the front lines are only now getting containerized kitchens. “We’re taking 12 of them to Iraq in October [2003],” said Marshall. “It’s going to be a much easier environment to cook in — much safer, much more sanitary.” ■

### Deployed Soldiers now compensated for R&R expenses

Service members who paid for their own stateside travel last fall when participating in the U.S. Central Command's rest and recuperation leave program should start gathering their receipts, because Congress has passed a law allowing retroactive reimbursement of expenses.

Public Law 108-220, signed April 22 by President Bush, covers airline tickets, mileage and other travel costs for people who used the emergency leave program from the time

it began last year in late September to Dec. 19.

The Defense Department now must draw up regulations explaining exactly who is eligible and how they will get the money.

Those affected were among the first people to use the R&R leave program that allowed a 15-day break for those who had combat tours of a year or more.

When the program first began in September, the Defense Department provided free transportation to a few hub airports in the continental United States.

But troops were left on their own to pay the cost of traveling from those locations to their homes and then back to the hubs to return to the war zone.

Congress decided last year to reimburse the stateside portion of travel as part of the \$87 billion Iraq and Afghanistan supplemental appropriations bill. But it took the Defense Department until Dec. 19 to issue implementing rules, and Pentagon lawyers determined that retroactive reimbursements for those

who had already traveled before that date were not allowed under the law.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates about 30,000 of the 38,000 troops will apply for average reimbursement of \$425 apiece. The estimate is based on the average cost of a domestic airline ticket.

The law contains no cutoff date for how long service members can take to apply, although the regulations to be issued by the Defense Department could contain deadlines.

### Army deploys lighter, faster AKO

The Web site Army Knowledge Online now offers a stripped-down version that loads up to 10 times faster than the regular service.

AKO Lite was developed in response to concerns of deployed Soldiers in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom that AKO took too long to access and use, said Lt. Col. Kenneth Blakely, chief of AKO.

"The normal AKO is very heavy with lots of bytes to download,"

Blakely said. "Soldiers said they want something faster, so we made AKO Lite. AKO Lite contains access links to the most popular AKO features, like the Web-based e-mail and instant messaging systems, and is very close to the full AKO experience."

A large part of the downsizing to make AKO Lite was getting rid of byte-hungry graphics. The AKO Lite homepage is about a third of the size of the regular version -- missing the pictures and links to Army senior

leaders, the Army and AKO logos, and the What's New at AKO, Quick Links, My Links and My KCC sections. Users can still access their knowledge collaboration centers via a link at the top of the page.

AKO Lite can be accessed through the regular AKO sign-in page, [www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil), from a link on the left side of the page. It works with the same user name and password as the regular AKO service.

— Army News Service



### \$28,000 in phone cards

The Wisconsin American Legion bought \$28,000 worth of phone cards to be given to the 32nd Military Police Company, currently deployed to Iraq. The Legion collected the donations from Legion members and the general public in only a month, through word of mouth. Presenting the phone cards to Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson are, from left, Legion officials Kathy Wollmer, executive secretary treasurer; Bill West, state adjutant; and David Gough, department commander.

### Hall of Honor

The Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor inducted five new members March 7 at the State Capitol rotunda in Madison.

Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening and Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson presented honors to Brig. Gen. Roger Greenwood, Brig. Gen. Charles Scharine, Lt. Col. John Sarko, Sgt. Maj. Jerry Rohloff and Master Sgt. Henry Esser.

The Hall was established in 2000 to honor those who have made exceptional contributions to the Wisconsin Army National Guard and to encourage remembrance of the best in Wisconsin's military.



## Governor Jim Doyle signs differential pay bill

Governor Jim Doyle signed into law two pieces of legislation supporting Guard and reserve members in March. Assembly Bill 418 helps Wisconsin state employees who are ordered to active duty by paying the difference between their military income and what they normally earn as state employees. This bill ensures these state employees are not financially penalized while serving their country on active duty.

The Governor also signed into law Assembly Bill 409, which requires county veterans services officers to provide the same services and assistance to members of the Guard and Reserve as they do for active duty members of the U.S. military.



## Tax free pay from employers

National Guardmembers who have been called to active duty and are serving in a combat zone, and who are receiving full or partial pay from their employer, are not required to pay tax on those earnings.

Guardmembers in this category who have paid tax on that pay must contact their employer and have them file an amended federal employment tax return (Form 941) as well as amended Forms W-2, Wage & Tax statements.

Further information can be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## Bonus for troops extended beyond one year in Iraq

Military members who are currently deployed in Iraq and who will be required to remain in-country beyond their unit's normal 12-month rotation return date are eligible for a hardship bonus.

Qualifying servicemembers will receive a flat \$200 in extra Hardship Duty Pay (HDP) for any month or any portion of a month served in Iraq beyond the date the member's unit was due to rotate out of Iraq. In addition, the member will get a flat \$800 per month in Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP), for any month in which the member performs service in Iraq beyond the scheduled 12-month rotation date.

## TRICARE: No pre-approval for care at civilian hospitals

People covered by the Tricare Standard military health care plan no longer need approval from their military treatment facility to seek inpatient care at civilian hospitals.

The need to get a nonavailability statement before seeking civilian inpatient care expired Dec. 28 under a provision of the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. A nonavailability statement indicates that care is not available from the military facility and authorizes care at a civilian facility.

An exception in the law continues the requirement for Tricare Standard beneficiaries to get a nonavailability statement before seeking nonemergency inpatient mental health care services.

However, officials said, this applies only to beneficiaries who use Tricare Standard or Extra, who are not Medicare eligible, and who have no other health insurance that is primary to Tricare. DoD does not require preauthorization for Tricare beneficiary inpatient mental health care when Medicare is the primary payer.

"With this change in policy, beneficiaries now have the freedom to choose a military treatment facility or a civilian facility, without any extra paperwork," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

More information is available on the Tricare Web site at [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil).

— American Forces Press Service



## Volk Field dedicates air traffic control tower

Gov. Jim Doyle, Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Wisconsin National Guard leaders helped dedicate Volk Field's new Air Traffic Control Tower April 2. The \$3.8-million facility replaces a 1950s vintage control tower and provides visibility to all areas of the airfield and all normal and emergency approach patterns for all types of aircraft. It also serves as the primary communications hub for the deployed unit exercise area at the base.

## Public can buy phone cards, gift certificates for deployed troops

The Defense Department has granted approval for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service to sell prepaid phone cards to the general public for donation to Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom service members.

By law, only patrons with military exchange

privileges can shop at AAFES retail stores, but officials announced this week that the exchange service would begin selling phone cards to normally ineligible people and organizations on its Web site.

"It is truly an effort by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to reach out

and to make sure that we keep our troops connected to home," Army Maj. Gen. Kathryn Frost, AAFES commander, explained.

Those wishing to purchase the cards or gift certificates to AAFES facilities can log on to **www.aafes.com** and click on the "Help Our Troops Call Home" icon. The cards

can be designated for an individual service member, or sent to "any service member" and distributed by the American Red Cross. Gift certificates to AAFES facilities are also available to purchase at **www.aafes.com** or by calling (877) 770-4438, toll-free.

— American Forces Press Service

## New temporary health benefits for Reserves announced

The Department of Defense announced that it will implement the "2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program" for certain eligible Reserve Component sponsors and their family members.

One provision temporarily authorizes Tricare medical and dental coverage for Reserve component sponsors activated for more than 30 days and their family members. Eligibility begins either on the day the sponsor receives delayed-effective date active duty orders or 90 days prior to

the date the active duty period begins, whichever is later.

A second provision temporarily extends eligibility for Tricare benefits to 180 days under the Transitional Assistance Management Program for Reserve component sponsors who separate from active duty status during the period Nov. 6, 2003 through Dec. 31, 2004, and their eligible family members.

The third provision temporarily extends Tricare medical benefits to Reserve component sponsors

and family members who are either unemployed or employed but not eligible for employer-provided health coverage.

These temporary provisions end on Dec. 31, 2004. Additional information for Reserve component families, who have questions regarding the Tricare benefit or need assistance processing Tricare claims, are available on the Tricare Web site at **www.tricare.osd.mil** and the Reserve Affairs Web site at **www.defenselink.mil/ra**.

## Army to grow by 30,000 troops during restructuring

The Army will grow to 510,000 soldiers over the next four years as a temporary measure, a senior Army official said.

The Army is building the new force around brigade combat teams. This concept takes much of the support now done at division level and pushes it to the brigades. Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets – including unmanned aerial vehicles – will be at brigade level.

Fire control will be beefed up and placed at brigades. Maintenance and transportation assets will be at brigades. Each brigade will have its own

artillery battalion, and the brigades will contain more infantrymen.

The current setup has a division with three brigades under it. In the future, a division will have four brigade combat teams.

The changes are not limited to the active component. The current 15 reserve-component enhanced separate brigades will expand to 22 National Guard brigade combat teams.

The system has been under development for the past 16 months, the official said. It will run at least through fiscal 2007.

— American Forces Press Service



## Williams honored by NAACP

Master Sgt. Delbert Williams, first sergeant at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, was honored June 10 with the National Association of Colored People (NAACP) Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award.

John J. Johnson, programs department chief for the NAACP said the recipients were selected for the honor during a yearlong search by the military service departments to identify people who have done exceptional work in the area of equal opportunity, affirmative action and other outreach civil rights work.

Williams was cited for "meritorious service with outstanding contributions to equal opportunity and civil right." He was also honored for his involvement with the Big Brothers and Big Sisters programs, the Beyond Walls organization, Aviation Careers Education Program, Running Rebels Community organization and many other groups.

— American Forces Press Service



Master Sgt. Delbert Williams, center right, was presented the NAACP's Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award by John J. Johnson, Maj. Gen. Paul Sullivan, left, and Lt. Gen. Daniel James III.

## U.S. flag insignia to be worn by all Soldiers

All Soldiers will now wear the U.S. flag insignia on the right shoulder of their utility uniform, as a continued reminder that the Army is engaged in a war at home and abroad.

"The flag has been around for years to identify deploying troops. Now based on the Army's joint expeditionary mindset, the flag represents our

commitment to fight the war on terror for the foreseeable future," said Sgt. Maj. Walter Morales, the uniform policy chief for G1.

All Soldiers have until Oct. 1, 2005 to get the insignia sewn on their uniforms.

Currently there are not enough flags in the inventory, which is why Soldiers have a substantial

amount of time to get the flags sewn on, Morales said.

Enlisted Soldiers will not have to purchase the flags. They will each be issued five flags from their assigned unit, and commanders will make arrangements for getting the insignia sewn on, Morales said. However, if Soldiers purchase the flags on

their own, they will not be reimbursed, he added.

When purchasing the flag, the only ones authorized for wear on the uniform is the reverse field flag in red, white and blue.

"The flag is worn on the right shoulder to give the effect of the flag flying in the breeze as the wearer moves forward," Morales said.

— Army News Service

## Wartime shapes Army training

The nature of today's military is ushering in sweeping changes in the way the Army trains its Soldiers.

From a Soldier's initial entry into the military at basic training, Soldiers are getting more rigorous training with more emphasis on soldiering skills, said Maj. Gen. Raymond Barrett, deputy chief of staff for operations in training at the command. In addition, Barrett said they're being psychologically prepared for the mission ahead.

At more senior levels, Barrett said training focuses on teaching leaders to think on their feet and adapt to

changes on the battlefield.

To keep pace with these changes, the Army's schoolhouses and combat training centers are duplicating conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan in their training scenarios. The training centers feature realistic villages and urban environments, as well as tunnels and cave complexes.

Meanwhile, students at the training centers encounter one of the biggest complexities of the war on terror: the overlapping of phases of the operation, particularly combat and stabilization missions.

— American Forces Press Service

## Events

### Fighter Wing Family Day

The 115th Fighter Wing will have its Pig Roast and Potluck on Saturday, July 3, from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at Truax Field. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to pass. Events will include a pig roast, silent auction, games with prizes, social activities and watching the Rhythm & Booms fireworks at 9:30 p.m. Fighter Wing members who would like to volunteer or who have questions can call 1-800-438-3489, ext. 4654.

### Big day at WMA

The Wisconsin Military Academy (WMA) at Fort McCoy has three events on August 21, 2004 that are open to the public. Officer Candidate School graduation and commissioning will be at 10:00 a.m., the WMA Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony takes place at 1:00 p.m. and the Regimental Change of Command will be at 3:00 p.m.



Members of the 832nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) wrap up a mountain rescue near Fort Lewis, Wash. Read about the 832nd on page 16 and other mobilized Wisconsin National Guard units on page 6.

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